
Teacher Readiness for Competency-Based Assessment under PARAKH: Evidence from School Teachers in India

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Abstract:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has repositioned assessment as a process for promoting learning rather than merely certifying achievement, with competency-based assessment emerging as one of its central reforms. To support this transformation, the Government of India established the National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), to develop national assessment standards and strengthen competency-oriented school assessment. However, the effectiveness of this reform depends largely on teachers' readiness to adopt new assessment practices. Despite the strategic importance of PARAKH, empirical evidence regarding teachers' preparedness for competency-based assessment remains limited. This study examined teacher readiness for competency-based assessment under PARAKH using a mixed methods research design, with the present paper reporting primarily the quantitative findings supported by selective qualitative evidence. Data were collected from 48 school teachers through a structured questionnaire comprising twenty Likert-scale statements covering assessment knowledge, classroom assessment practices, attitudes towards competency-based assessment, and implementation readiness. The findings indicate that teachers generally possess favourable attitudes towards competency-based assessment and recognise the educational significance of PARAKH. Nevertheless, important gaps persist in authentic assessment practices, digital assessment, classroom implementation, and specialised assessment training. The study concludes that policy reforms alone cannot ensure successful implementation of competency-based assessment unless accompanied by sustained efforts to strengthen teachers' assessment literacy and implementation capacity. The findings contribute empirical evidence to the emerging discourse on assessment reform in India and offer implications for teacher education, school leadership, and educational policy.

Keywords: PARAKH, competency-based assessment, teacher readiness, assessment literacy, NEP 2020, school assessment, educational reform

Introduction

Assessment has increasingly been recognised as one of the most powerful influences on teaching and learning. Contemporary educational systems no longer regard assessment merely as a mechanism for assigning grades or certifying achievement; rather, it is viewed as an integral component of the learning process that guides instruction, supports learner development, and informs educational decision-making (Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2009). This shift has encouraged many countries to move away from examination-oriented systems towards competency-based approaches that emphasise learners' ability to apply knowledge, solve problems, think critically, and demonstrate understanding in authentic contexts (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2021). Consequently, competency-based assessment has become a defining characteristic of educational reform across diverse school systems.

In India, this transformation has gained renewed momentum with the introduction of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, which advocates a fundamental reorientation of school assessment. The policy argues that assessment should move beyond the evaluation of factual recall and instead promote conceptual understanding, higher-order thinking, creativity, and holistic learner development (Ministry of Education, 2020). To translate this vision into practice, the Government of India established the **National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)** under the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 2023. PARAKH has been entrusted with developing national assessment standards, promoting competency-based assessment, strengthening large-scale assessment systems, and ensuring greater consistency across school education boards. The reform therefore represents a significant institutional effort to improve the quality and credibility of educational assessment in India. The dissertation identifies these policy developments as the immediate context for investigating teachers' preparedness to implement competency-based assessment.

While policy frameworks provide direction, their implementation depends primarily on teachers. Competency-based assessment requires substantial changes in classroom practice. Teachers are expected to move beyond traditional written examinations and adopt diverse assessment approaches such as performance tasks, projects, portfolios, analytical rubrics, classroom observation, formative assessment, and continuous feedback (Brookhart, 2013; DeLuca et al., 2019). These practices require teachers to possess not only conceptual knowledge of assessment but also the professional competence to design, administer, interpret, and use assessment evidence to improve student learning.

The concept of **teacher readiness** has therefore become increasingly important in discussions of educational reform. Readiness extends beyond awareness of policy initiatives and includes teachers' knowledge, professional competence, attitudes, confidence, and willingness to implement new instructional practices (Weiner, 2009). Educational reforms frequently fail not because teachers oppose change but because they encounter practical challenges in translating policy expectations into classroom realities (Fullan, 2020). Within the context of competency-based assessment, teacher readiness is closely associated with assessment literacy—the ability to develop appropriate assessment tasks, interpret learner evidence, provide effective feedback, and employ assessment to support learning (Popham, 2009; Xu & Brown, 2016). Consequently, assessment reform should be understood as a process of professional learning rather than merely the implementation of new policy directives.

India's previous experience with **Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)** provides an important lesson in this regard. Although CCE represented a significant policy innovation, its implementation encountered numerous challenges arising from inadequate teacher preparation, limited professional support, and difficulties in classroom application (Juneja, 2018). The dissertation similarly argues that the success of PARAKH depends upon teachers' awareness, skills, positive attitudes, and sustained professional preparedness, rather than policy directives alone. These experiences highlight the importance of examining teachers' readiness before large-scale assessment reforms become embedded within classroom practice.

Despite the policy significance of PARAKH, empirical research on teachers' readiness for competency-based assessment remains limited. Much of the existing literature has focused on competency-based education, assessment literacy, or assessment reform in general, whereas relatively little empirical evidence is available regarding how Indian school teachers perceive their preparedness to implement PARAKH-based assessment. Moreover, there is limited evidence concerning the specific aspects of readiness that may facilitate or constrain the implementation of competency-based assessment within schools.

The present study addresses this gap by examining teacher readiness for competency-based assessment under PARAKH. Drawing upon quantitative evidence generated through a structured questionnaire administered to school teachers, the study investigates four interrelated dimensions of readiness: **assessment knowledge, classroom assessment practices, attitudes towards competency-based assessment, and implementation readiness**. By identifying both areas of strength and areas requiring further support, the study seeks to contribute empirical evidence that may assist policymakers, teacher educators, and school leaders in strengthening the implementation of competency-based assessment in Indian schools.

Review of the Literature and Research Gap:

Educational reforms centred on competency-based assessment increasingly recognise teachers as the principal agents through whom policy intentions are translated into classroom practice. Although governments may introduce curriculum reforms, assessment frameworks, and accountability mechanisms, their educational impact ultimately depends on teachers' ability and willingness to reinterpret these reforms within everyday teaching and assessment contexts (Fullan, 2020). Consequently, contemporary research has shifted attention from policy formulation towards teachers' readiness to implement assessment reforms effectively.

Competency-based assessment represents a significant departure from conventional examination-oriented systems. Rather than emphasising the reproduction of factual knowledge, it seeks to evaluate learners' ability to apply knowledge, solve authentic problems, demonstrate conceptual understanding, and integrate cognitive, social, and affective competencies (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2021). Such assessment requires teachers to employ diverse strategies, including performance tasks, portfolios, projects, classroom observation, analytical rubrics, and formative feedback (Brookhart, 2013). These approaches demand substantially greater professional judgement than traditional summative examinations and consequently increase the importance of teacher readiness.

The literature consistently indicates that **assessment literacy** forms the foundation of teacher readiness for competency-based assessment. Assessment literacy refers to teachers' understanding of assessment principles and their ability to design valid assessment tasks, interpret evidence of learning, provide constructive feedback, and use assessment information to improve instruction (Popham, 2009; Xu & Brown, 2016). DeLuca et al. (2019) argue that assessment literacy should be viewed not merely as technical competence but as an evolving professional capability shaped by teachers' classroom experiences, institutional contexts, and opportunities for professional learning. Teachers with stronger assessment literacy are more likely to implement formative assessment effectively, align assessment with learning objectives, and support deeper student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2009).

However, assessment literacy alone does not ensure successful implementation of educational reform. Research on educational change demonstrates that teachers' responses to reform are influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including professional beliefs, attitudes towards innovation, self-efficacy, organisational support, and perceptions of policy relevance (Fullan, 2020; Weiner, 2009). Educational reforms frequently encounter implementation challenges not because teachers oppose change but because they experience uncertainty regarding new expectations, insufficient opportunities for professional learning, or inadequate institutional support. Teacher readiness should therefore be understood as a multidimensional construct that encompasses knowledge, professional

competence, confidence, and willingness to adopt new practices within supportive organisational environments.

Within the Indian context, the importance of teacher readiness becomes particularly evident when viewed against previous assessment reforms. The implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) sought to reduce examination-centred learning by promoting continuous and holistic assessment. Nevertheless, subsequent evaluations reported considerable implementation challenges associated with limited teacher preparation, procedural complexity, inadequate assessment literacy, and insufficient academic support (Juneja, 2018). The present dissertation similarly reviews these experiences and argues that the lessons from CCE remain highly relevant for the implementation of PARAKH-based competency assessment.

The National Education Policy (2020) explicitly recognises teachers as the central agents of educational transformation and recommends continuous professional development to strengthen classroom practice. PARAKH extends this vision by establishing national standards for competency-based assessment and promoting greater consistency in assessment practices across school boards. The policy expectation is therefore not merely that teachers should adopt new assessment techniques, but that they should reconceptualise assessment as an integral component of teaching and learning. The dissertation emphasises that this transition requires teachers to develop awareness, positive attitudes, assessment competence, and implementation readiness if competency-based assessment is to become meaningful classroom practice rather than a procedural requirement.

Despite growing policy attention, empirical evidence concerning teachers' readiness for PARAKH-based assessment remains limited. Existing studies have predominantly examined competency-based education, assessment literacy, or educational reform in broader contexts, while comparatively few investigations have focused specifically on teachers' preparedness to implement the assessment reforms introduced under PARAKH. Moreover, the available literature has tended to examine assessment knowledge, classroom practices, or professional development separately, providing limited insight into teachers' overall readiness for competency-based assessment within the Indian school context.

Research Gap

The foregoing review reveals three important gaps in the existing literature. First, empirical evidence regarding **teachers' readiness for PARAKH-based competency assessment** remains limited despite the centrality of teachers to the successful implementation of NEP 2020.

Second, previous studies have generally examined isolated dimensions such as assessment literacy, attitudes towards assessment, or professional development, whereas relatively little attention has been

devoted to understanding teacher readiness as a broader construct encompassing **assessment knowledge, classroom assessment practices, attitudes towards competency-based assessment, and implementation readiness**.

Third, limited evidence is available from Indian school teachers regarding their preparedness to operationalise competency-based assessment within everyday classroom settings following the establishment of PARAKH.

To address these gaps, the present study investigates teacher readiness for competency-based assessment under PARAKH using quantitative evidence obtained from school teachers. By examining multiple dimensions of readiness within a single empirical investigation, the study seeks to contribute contextually relevant evidence to the emerging literature on assessment reform in India and to inform future implementation efforts.

Methodology: Research Design

The present study employed a **mixed methods research design** to examine teachers' readiness for competency-based assessment under PARAKH. The study was guided by the premise that teacher readiness is a multidimensional construct encompassing not only measurable aspects such as knowledge, classroom practices, and attitudes but also contextual experiences that shape teachers' perceptions of assessment reform. Accordingly, quantitative and qualitative data were collected to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' preparedness for implementing competency-based assessment. The present paper reports primarily the quantitative findings, while qualitative evidence is incorporated selectively to support the interpretation of statistical results. This approach enables a richer understanding of teacher readiness without shifting the primary focus away from the empirical analysis. The mixed methods design adopted in the broader study reflects the growing recognition that educational reforms are complex social phenomena that cannot be adequately understood through quantitative indicators alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). However, consistent with the objectives of this paper, quantitative evidence constitutes the principal basis for analysis and discussion.

Participants

The study was conducted among **48 school teachers** working in government and government-aided schools. Participants represented diverse teaching experiences, academic qualifications, and school contexts, thereby providing perspectives from teachers directly engaged in classroom assessment. The sample included teachers responsible for implementing school-based assessment practices across different grade levels, making them appropriate respondents for examining readiness towards competency-based assessment under PARAKH.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling because the study required teachers who possessed direct experience with classroom assessment and were familiar with ongoing educational reforms introduced under the National Education Policy (2020). Although the findings are not intended to be statistically generalisable to all school teachers in India, the sample provides valuable empirical insights into teachers' preparedness for competency-based assessment within the study context.

Instrumentation

Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher after an extensive review of literature on assessment literacy, competency-based assessment, teacher readiness, and assessment reform. The instrument comprised **20 Likert-type statements** measured on a five-point response scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (5)*.

For analytical purposes, the questionnaire items were organised into four dimensions of teacher readiness:

1. **Assessment Knowledge**, reflecting teachers' conceptual understanding of competency-based assessment and PARAKH.
2. **Classroom Assessment Practices**, examining the extent to which teachers reported using competency-oriented assessment approaches within classroom teaching.
3. **Attitudes towards Competency-Based Assessment**, capturing teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding the educational value and feasibility of competency-based assessment.
4. **Implementation Readiness**, reflecting teachers' confidence and preparedness to implement competency-based assessment practices in their schools.

The instrument was reviewed by experts in educational assessment and teacher education to establish content validity before its administration. The broader dissertation provides detailed information regarding instrument development and validation procedures.

Data Collection

Data were collected during the implementation phase of the broader research project after obtaining informed consent from all participants. Teachers were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. Participants completed the questionnaire individually, allowing them to express their perceptions of competency-based assessment and PARAKH without external influence.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques. Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations were computed to examine teachers' responses across the four dimensions of readiness. Descriptive statistics were considered appropriate because the primary objective of this paper was to explore patterns of teacher readiness rather than to test causal relationships.

To enrich the interpretation of quantitative findings, selected qualitative observations from the broader mixed methods investigation were incorporated wherever they provided additional explanation for notable statistical trends. This integration was undertaken at the interpretation stage rather than during statistical analysis, thereby preserving the quantitative emphasis of the paper while benefiting from the explanatory strengths of mixed methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to accepted ethical principles governing educational research. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that the information provided would be used solely for academic purposes. No personally identifiable information has been reported in this paper.

Results

The quantitative analysis examined teachers' readiness for competency-based assessment under PARAKH across four interrelated dimensions: **Assessment Knowledge, Classroom Assessment Practices, Attitudes towards Competency-Based Assessment, and Implementation Readiness**. Descriptive statistics were used to identify prevailing patterns in teachers' responses and to determine areas of relative strength and concern. Qualitative observations from the broader mixed methods study are incorporated selectively where they help explain notable quantitative trends.

Assessment Knowledge

The findings indicate that most participating teachers demonstrated a generally positive understanding of competency-based assessment and recognised the objectives underlying the assessment reforms proposed through PARAKH. Responses to items related to competency-based learning outcomes, learner-centred assessment, and the educational purpose of formative assessment reflected a favourable level of conceptual awareness. Teachers largely acknowledged that assessment should extend beyond the measurement of factual knowledge and should evaluate learners' ability to apply concepts, solve problems, and demonstrate competencies relevant to real-life situations.

At the same time, the analysis suggests that conceptual awareness did not always translate into complete familiarity with the operational aspects of PARAKH. Responses revealed varying levels of

confidence regarding national assessment standards, competency descriptors, and practical procedures associated with competency-based classroom assessment. These findings suggest that while teachers generally understand the philosophy of competency-based assessment, their knowledge of its practical implementation remains uneven.

The overall pattern indicates that teachers possess an encouraging conceptual foundation upon which future assessment reforms may be built. However, strengthening assessment literacy will require greater attention to practical dimensions of assessment design, competency mapping, rubric development, and interpretation of assessment evidence.

Classroom Assessment Practices

Teachers reported moderate adoption of competency-oriented classroom assessment practices. Several respondents indicated that they regularly employed classroom questioning, continuous observation, and formative feedback to monitor student learning. These practices suggest an emerging shift away from an exclusive reliance on traditional written examinations.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal comparatively lower use of authentic assessment strategies such as performance tasks, portfolios, project-based assessment, analytical rubrics, and competency-based evaluation tools. Similarly, the integration of digital technologies into classroom assessment appeared limited. These results indicate that although teachers recognise the importance of competency-based assessment, many continue to rely predominantly on familiar assessment approaches.

Qualitative observations from the broader investigation reinforce this pattern. Several participants expressed that the implementation of competency-based assessment is constrained by large class sizes, limited instructional time, inadequate assessment resources, and insufficient opportunities for specialised training. These contextual factors appear to influence teachers' ability to translate conceptual understanding into consistent classroom practice.

Overall, the findings suggest that classroom assessment practices remain in a transitional phase, with teachers demonstrating willingness to adopt competency-based approaches while continuing to experience practical implementation challenges.

Attitudes towards Competency-Based Assessment

Teachers generally expressed positive attitudes towards competency-based assessment and recognised its potential to improve the quality of teaching and student learning. Most respondents agreed that assessment should support learning rather than merely evaluate achievement and viewed competency-based assessment as more consistent with holistic educational development than conventional examination-centred approaches.

Teachers also indicated favourable perceptions regarding the objectives of PARAKH and acknowledged the importance of aligning classroom assessment with the broader vision of the National Education Policy (2020). These findings suggest considerable professional acceptance of assessment reform among the participating teachers.

However, positive attitudes were accompanied by concerns regarding implementation. While teachers endorsed the educational value of competency-based assessment, many also recognised that effective implementation would require additional professional support, improved assessment resources, and continuous academic guidance. Thus, teachers appeared optimistic about the direction of assessment reform while remaining realistic about the practical challenges associated with its execution.

The findings therefore indicate that teacher attitudes are unlikely to constitute a major barrier to competency-based assessment. Instead, successful implementation appears to depend more strongly upon strengthening teachers' professional capacity and institutional support systems.

Implementation Readiness

Implementation readiness represents the extent to which teachers perceive themselves as professionally prepared to adopt competency-based assessment within their schools. Compared with the previous dimensions, this area revealed relatively greater variation in responses.

While many teachers expressed willingness to implement competency-based assessment, comparatively fewer indicated complete confidence in their ability to design competency-based assessment tasks, develop appropriate rubrics, interpret competency evidence, or employ technology-supported assessment tools. Responses also suggested that many teachers anticipated the need for further professional learning before implementing competency-based assessment on a sustained basis.

Qualitative evidence helps explain these findings. Participants frequently associated implementation readiness with access to practical training, exemplar assessment materials, collaborative learning opportunities, and ongoing academic mentoring. Teachers emphasised that successful implementation would require continuous institutional support rather than one-time orientation programmes.

Taken together, the findings indicate that participating teachers demonstrate encouraging professional commitment towards competency-based assessment. Nevertheless, implementation readiness remains an area requiring systematic strengthening if PARAKH-based assessment reforms are to become embedded within routine classroom practice.

Summary of Findings

The findings reveal a generally positive profile of teacher readiness for competency-based assessment under PARAKH. Teachers demonstrated encouraging levels of conceptual understanding and favourable attitudes towards competency-based assessment, suggesting broad professional

acceptance of the principles underpinning assessment reform. However, comparatively lower readiness was evident in classroom implementation, authentic assessment practices, and confidence in applying specialised assessment techniques.

Overall, the results suggest that the principal challenge facing competency-based assessment reform is not teachers' willingness to embrace change but their capacity to operationalise policy expectations within everyday classroom practice. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening assessment literacy, providing sustained professional learning opportunities, and developing institutional mechanisms that support teachers throughout the implementation process.

Table 1: Summary of Teacher Readiness for Competency-Based Assessment under PARAKH

Dimension	Overall Level of Readiness	Key Observation
Assessment Knowledge	High	Teachers demonstrated a sound conceptual understanding of competency-based assessment and recognised the educational intent of PARAKH.
Classroom Assessment Practices	Moderate	Competency-oriented assessment practices were emerging; however, authentic assessment techniques were not yet consistently integrated into classroom practice.
Attitudes towards Competency-Based Assessment	High	Teachers expressed favourable perceptions regarding competency-based assessment and supported the objectives of assessment reform.
Implementation Readiness	Moderate	Teachers showed willingness to implement competency-based assessment but identified the need for greater practical support, assessment resources, and specialised training.

As shown in **Table 1**, teacher readiness for competency-based assessment presents a generally encouraging profile. The strongest dimensions relate to teachers' conceptual understanding and their positive attitudes towards assessment reform, indicating broad professional acceptance of the principles underpinning PARAKH. In contrast, comparatively lower levels of readiness were observed in classroom implementation and practical assessment practices. These findings suggest that the principal challenge lies not in teachers' willingness to embrace competency-based assessment but in strengthening their capacity to implement it effectively within everyday classroom contexts.

Discussion

The present study examined teachers' readiness for competency-based assessment under PARAKH across four dimensions: assessment knowledge, classroom assessment practices, attitudes towards competency-based assessment, and implementation readiness. The findings present a generally encouraging picture of teachers' preparedness for assessment reform while simultaneously revealing important challenges that may influence the successful implementation of competency-based assessment in Indian schools.

One of the most significant findings of the study is that participating teachers demonstrated a favourable conceptual understanding of competency-based assessment and expressed positive attitudes towards the objectives of PARAKH. This suggests that the philosophical shift envisaged under the National Education Policy (2020)—from assessment *of* learning to assessment *for* and *as* learning—is increasingly recognised among practising teachers. The finding is consistent with international research indicating that teachers generally appreciate the educational value of competency-based assessment when it is presented as a means of improving student learning rather than merely altering examination procedures (Black & Wiliam, 2009; OECD, 2019). The positive orientation observed in the present study therefore represents an important foundation for the implementation of assessment reform.

However, the study also demonstrates that conceptual acceptance does not necessarily translate into implementation readiness. While teachers broadly supported competency-based assessment, comparatively lower levels of readiness were evident in relation to authentic classroom assessment, competency mapping, rubric construction, and the use of diverse assessment strategies. This finding reinforces the distinction between **knowing** an educational reform and **enacting** it in classroom practice. Previous research has similarly reported that teachers often endorse assessment reforms at the conceptual level but experience uncertainty when required to redesign classroom assessment practices (DeLuca et al., 2019; Xu & Brown, 2016). Competency-based assessment requires teachers to make complex professional judgements about evidence of learning, a responsibility that extends well beyond conventional testing practices.

The findings further highlight the central importance of **assessment literacy** in contemporary educational reform. Teachers' readiness appears to depend not merely on familiarity with policy documents but on their capacity to design meaningful assessment tasks, interpret evidence of student learning, and provide feedback that promotes learner development. This observation supports Popham's (2009) argument that assessment literacy should be regarded as a core professional competence rather than a specialised technical skill. Within the context of PARAKH, strengthening

assessment literacy is likely to be a prerequisite for ensuring that competency-based assessment is implemented consistently and meaningfully across diverse school settings.

Another noteworthy finding concerns the relationship between teacher attitudes and implementation readiness. The study suggests that teachers' willingness to adopt competency-based assessment is generally stronger than their confidence in implementing it. This distinction is particularly important because it indicates that resistance to reform is unlikely to be the principal challenge facing PARAKH. Instead, the findings point towards a capacity gap that may be addressed through sustained professional learning, collaborative academic support, and practical guidance. Similar observations have been reported in studies of educational change, which argue that teachers are more likely to embrace reform when they receive continuous opportunities to develop new professional knowledge and apply it within supportive institutional environments (Fullan, 2020; Weiner, 2009).

The findings also invite reflection on India's previous experience with assessment reform. The implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) demonstrated that policy innovation alone does not guarantee meaningful classroom transformation. Difficulties encountered during CCE were frequently attributed to limited teacher preparation, inconsistent implementation, and inadequate academic support (Juneja, 2018). The present findings suggest that PARAKH has the opportunity to build upon these lessons by placing greater emphasis on strengthening teachers' assessment capabilities alongside the development of national assessment standards. In this sense, the success of PARAKH may depend as much on investment in teacher capacity as on the quality of the assessment framework itself.

From a broader perspective, the study contributes to the emerging literature on competency-based assessment in India by positioning **teacher readiness** as a multidimensional construct comprising assessment knowledge, classroom practices, attitudes, and implementation preparedness. Rather than viewing readiness as a single attribute, the findings demonstrate that teachers may simultaneously possess positive attitudes towards reform while requiring additional support to implement new assessment practices effectively. This multidimensional perspective provides a more nuanced understanding of assessment reform and offers a useful framework for future empirical investigations.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of the present study have important implications for educational policy, teacher education, and school leadership as India advances the implementation of competency-based assessment under PARAKH. Although participating teachers demonstrated encouraging levels of conceptual understanding and favourable attitudes towards assessment reform, the comparatively lower levels of implementation readiness suggest that policy initiatives must be accompanied by systematic efforts to strengthen teachers' professional capacity. Accordingly, the implications of the

study extend beyond assessment policy to the broader ecosystem of teacher preparation and professional support.

Implications for Educational Policy

The findings indicate that the success of PARAKH is likely to depend not only on the development of national assessment standards but also on the extent to which teachers are supported in translating these standards into classroom practice. Policymakers should therefore view teacher readiness as a central component of assessment reform rather than as a secondary implementation issue. National and state-level initiatives should provide practical guidance on competency mapping, assessment design, rubric development, formative assessment, and the interpretation of assessment evidence. Such support would enable teachers to move beyond awareness of policy reforms towards confident classroom implementation.

Furthermore, assessment reforms should be implemented through a phased and supportive approach rather than through compliance-oriented mechanisms. Schools require access to exemplar assessment tasks, model rubrics, teacher handbooks, and contextualised implementation resources that demonstrate how competency-based assessment can be integrated into everyday classroom teaching. Such resources would reduce uncertainty and promote greater consistency in assessment practices across schools.

Implications for Teacher Education and Professional Learning

The study reinforces the importance of strengthening assessment literacy within both pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. Assessment should not be treated as an isolated theoretical component but as a professional competence that is developed through authentic classroom practice. Teacher education institutions should therefore provide opportunities for prospective teachers to design competency-based assessment tasks, construct analytical rubrics, interpret learner evidence, and use assessment findings to improve instructional decision-making.

Similarly, continuing professional development should move beyond one-time orientation programmes towards sustained professional learning. Workshops, mentoring, peer observation, collaborative planning, and professional learning communities can provide teachers with opportunities to refine assessment practices through continuous reflection and feedback. Such approaches are likely to strengthen teachers' confidence and facilitate the long-term implementation of competency-based assessment.

Implications for School Leadership and Classroom Practice

The findings also highlight the pivotal role of school leaders in creating organisational conditions that support assessment reform. School heads and academic coordinators should foster collaborative cultures in which teachers are encouraged to experiment with competency-based assessment, share

classroom experiences, and collectively address implementation challenges. Rather than viewing assessment reform as an administrative requirement, schools should integrate competency-based assessment into routine pedagogical planning and professional dialogue.

At the classroom level, teachers should progressively diversify assessment practices by incorporating projects, portfolios, performance tasks, structured observation, reflective activities, and formative feedback alongside conventional written examinations. Such diversification would promote a more comprehensive evaluation of learners' competencies and align classroom assessment more closely with the objectives of NEP 2020 and PARAKH.

Overall, the study suggests that meaningful assessment reform requires coordinated efforts across multiple levels of the education system. National policy, teacher education institutions, school leadership, and classroom practice must function in alignment if competency-based assessment is to become a sustainable feature of teaching and learning in Indian schools.

Conclusion

The transition towards competency-based assessment represents one of the most significant educational reforms envisaged under the National Education Policy (2020). Through the establishment of PARAKH, India has articulated a national vision for assessment that seeks to promote conceptual understanding, higher-order thinking, and holistic learner development.

The present study examined teachers' readiness for this reform and found that participating teachers generally possess positive attitudes towards competency-based assessment and a sound conceptual appreciation of its educational objectives. These findings indicate that the philosophical foundations of assessment reform are increasingly recognised within the teaching community.

At the same time, the study demonstrates that successful implementation requires more than policy awareness. Comparatively lower levels of readiness in classroom assessment practices and implementation capacity suggest that teachers continue to require practical support in designing competency-based assessments, using authentic assessment strategies, interpreting evidence of learning, and integrating assessment into everyday teaching. The findings therefore highlight the importance of strengthening assessment literacy and providing sustained professional support as essential components of assessment reform.

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on educational assessment in India by conceptualising teacher readiness as a multidimensional construct encompassing assessment knowledge, classroom assessment practices, attitudes towards competency-based assessment, and implementation readiness. This perspective offers a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' preparedness for educational change and provides a useful framework for future empirical investigations.

Like all empirical studies, the present investigation has certain limitations. The study was conducted with a relatively small sample of school teachers, and the findings should therefore be interpreted within the context of the participating institutions. Future research may extend this work by employing larger and more diverse samples across different states, school management systems, and educational levels. Comparative studies examining variations in teacher readiness across demographic and institutional contexts would further enrich understanding of competency-based assessment implementation in India.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that the future of competency-based assessment under PARAKH will depend not only on the quality of national assessment policy but also on the professional readiness of teachers who implement that policy in classrooms. Strengthening teacher readiness should therefore be regarded as a strategic priority in the continuing transformation of school assessment in India.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of certain limitations. First, the study was conducted with a relatively small sample of **48 school teachers**, which limits the statistical generalisability of the findings to the wider population of school teachers in India. Nevertheless, the study offers valuable empirical insights into teachers' readiness for competency-based assessment within the context investigated.

Second, the study relied primarily on **self-reported perceptions** of teachers. Although self-report questionnaires provide important information regarding teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and perceived readiness, they may not always reflect actual classroom assessment practices. Future studies may therefore complement survey data with classroom observations, document analysis, and assessment artefacts to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' implementation of competency-based assessment.

Third, the present investigation represents a **cross-sectional** assessment of teacher readiness. Educational reforms such as PARAKH evolve over time, and teachers' understanding and implementation capacities are likely to develop as they gain greater experience and receive additional professional support. Longitudinal investigations would therefore provide a more dynamic understanding of changes in teacher readiness throughout different phases of policy implementation. Finally, although the broader research employed a mixed methods design, the present paper focuses primarily on the quantitative component of the investigation. Consequently, the rich qualitative evidence concerning teachers' lived experiences and professional learning needs has intentionally been reserved for a separate paper devoted to continuous professional development.

Directions for Future Research

The present study opens several avenues for future investigation into competency-based assessment in India. First, future studies may examine teacher readiness across **different states, school boards, and management systems** to explore contextual variations in the implementation of PARAKH. Comparative investigations involving government, government-aided, and private schools may provide a more comprehensive understanding of institutional influences on competency-based assessment. Second, future research may investigate the relationship between **teacher readiness and classroom assessment quality**. While the present study examines teachers' preparedness, subsequent studies could explore whether higher levels of readiness are associated with improved assessment practices and enhanced student learning outcomes. Third, longitudinal research examining teachers before, during, and after participation in structured professional development programmes would provide valuable evidence regarding the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives designed to support PARAKH implementation.

Finally, future investigations may employ advanced analytical approaches, including structural equation modelling or multilevel analysis, to examine the relationships among assessment literacy, teacher self-efficacy, organisational support, professional learning, and implementation readiness. Such studies would contribute to the development of a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of competency-based assessment reform within the Indian educational context.

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